



*Town of Weare
Conservation Commission*

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Conservation Commission

Andy Fulton, Chairman
Andrea Alderman, Vice Chair
Patricia Myers, Secretary
Stephen Najjar
George Malette

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

MINUTES

May 14, 2008

****DRAFT COPY****

MEMBERS PRESENT: Andrea Alderman, Vice Chair; Pat Myers; George Malette; Steve Najjar.

GUESTS: Helene Kurk; Arthur Townes; Ian McSweeney, Russell Foundation.

I. Call to Order:

Vice Chair Alderman called the meeting to order at 7:10pm at the Weare Town Office Building. WCC Chair Andy Fulton was unable to be present. V. Chair Alderman suggested the Commission hear from our guests before beginning our agenda.

II. Public Participation:

Helene Kurk was present to speak to the Commission as a concerned Weare resident, stressing that she was not representing the BOS. Helene reminded the Commission that she has been a longtime conservation supporter and was there as a friend. She told the Commission that news of the events on Mountain Road (the class 6 extension) relating to the PSNH transmission line upgrade and subsequent disruption and damage to the local environment, had raised concern among some Weare residents about the level of care given town owned conservation lands. She asked the Conservation Commission what role it has in monitoring and maintaining these properties. She asked if the Commission visits them to watch for problems or damage. Commission members described the annual on-the-ground monitoring of those properties that were purchased in part with state LCIP money or are covered by conservation easements (CE) held by the town. Members further stated that town owned parcels that are designated as conservation land but do not as yet have CEs may not receive regular monitoring visits due to the limited number of volunteers available to conduct them. Helene expressed concern that public support for future land protection projects could erode if there was a perception that existing conservation properties were being degraded.

Arthur Townes was present for the discussion of the second draft of the Conservation Easement for the open space portion of the Beverly Townes subdivision. Michael Dahlberg was unable to attend. Commission members reviewed the proposed CE and discussed the wording in several sections on issues including: hunting, agriculture, enforcement responsibility. In addition, two key issues were identified that members agreed must be resolved before moving forward: (1) Is it wise or even legal to create a CE which encompasses portions of 4 parcels. Currently the parcels are owned by the proposed Grantor, but 3 are to be sold as residential building lots. In addition, this proposed CE appears to result in a landlocked parcel. Is this allowed in Weare's subdivision regulations? (2) Should the WCC attempt to deal with the issue of conversion of forest to farmland in this CE? This land is already going through the Planning Board process. If the CE is to allow the conversion of the currently forested land to agricultural purposes in the future, the commission must draft new language. The conversion language would need to cover a number of potential scenarios to avoid adverse

impacts on the established forest flora and fauna. Is it in the best interests of the town to rush into this issue?

Ian McSweeney was present to encourage the Commission to take on a larger role and a clearer voice in the efforts to deal with complicated issues and technical problems related to the PSNH activities at Mountain Road / Ferrin Pond. He assured us that he was not criticizing the Commission's efforts. He pointed out that we are the one town board with the expertise needed to advise the BOS on a course of action. He pointed out that finding a long-term solution to allowing access to Mountain Road while reducing the abuse of it will be a challenge. He mentioned a couple possibilities for discussion: 1) close the class VI portion of Mountain Road. 2) put conservation easement(s) on the town held properties in the vicinity. This would spread out the monitoring effort to a larger pool of volunteers. There was discussion of the idea of closing the road. Steve pointed out that closing a class VI road was the same as discontinuing it which would cause the ROW to be split down the center line, each side reverting to that abutter. This could result in a total loss of public access. Members agreed that that was an unacceptable outcome. The idea of gating was discussed. Property owners on Mountain Road would all have to have keys. The gate could be at the intersection of paved Mountain Road with Class VI Mountain Road or it might be on Class VI Mountain Road just beyond the gate to the Fish & Game Road to Ferrin Pond itself. Perhaps the gate would only need to be locked when road conditions were poor or whenever destructive activity worsened. The idea of webcamming the road was discussed. This would provide hard evidence on the type and frequency of abuse. Lastly, Ian stated that a meeting with PSNH would be scheduled for May 21, 22, or 23 to coincide with the start of the restoration work. He urged the WCC to be present. He also recommended that a second meeting be held before the work is complete (2 to 3 weeks) so that problems could be discovered while the equipment was still on site. Lastly, he suggested a follow-up meeting with the BOS after the second meeting with PSNH.

- III. **Hawkes / Wilson project:** Steve reported that he had contacted an appraiser _____ to take over for Scott Dickman. The Commission reviewed her contract with Steve pointing out that it includes a timber value appraisal as part of the overall work. There was discussion about the necessity of the timber appraisal and whether the Conservation Fund balance would cover it. Steve made a motion to spend up to \$4000 for the 2 appraisals and up to \$2000 more for the appraisal of timber value. The motion was seconded by Pat. The voted was unanimous in favor.

- IV. **Minutes:**
Minutes of April 9, 2008: corrections: remove the names of Tom Carr, John Ciampi and Paul Kosciuszec from the letterhead. Under V. Wetlands Bureau add a space between expeditedapplication. George made motion to accept the minutes of 4/9/2008. Steve 2nd. All voted in favor.

Steve excused himself from the meeting this point.

- V. **Planning Board:**
Lydia Townes – site plan review. North Stark Highway, Map/lot #203-044.001.
No problems seen, no comment to the Planning Board..

- VI. **NHDES Bureaus:**
DES Wetlands Bureau #2008-00518 May,9 2008 – Complete Forestry Notification – Burnt Hill Road.
No comments.
DES Wetlands Bureau # 2008-00383 – High Rock Development / Daniel's Lake – April 10, 2008. DES has requested more information on 5 issues. See the April 22, 2008 response to DES from Art Siciliano.
DES Dam Bureau #2007-02190 – Horace Lake Marsh. This is the Abijah Bridge dam project. The Marsh is a designated Prime Wetland. This is notification of a 20 day period to reconsider a project in a Prime Wetland.

DES Wetlands Bureau #2004-00967 – Durgin. This is the Durgin subdivision on Colby Road. DES is requesting more information for this permit application. No discussion.

VII. Other Items:

Letter from JSHS biology teacher Barb Beers to the WCC inquiring about interest in a field project with the high school students. Discussion was that Andy invite her to a future meeting to present her ideas.

Email question from **Laura French of Meadowsend, working with Jeremy Turner** on a timber management plan for the Eastman Conservation Area. She requested more up-to-date information on property boundaries. Andrea reported that she had spoken to Laura and the issue was taken care of.

Scenic view photos from Christine – Andrea did receive them and incorporated them into the information for the Co-occurrence map.

Latest **statement on the Conservation Fund** account. It was completely undecipherable to commission members. Andrea will get some advice on it's meaning.

Check received from the PSNH community grants. It is to be deposited into the Unrestricted Grants Account.

Letter 4-24-08 from **Glenn Dubois reporting on his 2007-08 fur season** and wildlife observations at the Wood Family Forest. His take was: 1 large male Fisher and 3 Beaver. He observed Coyote, Fisher, Bobcat, and Weasel sign.

Invoice dated 4-23-08 received from NH NHI for the Town Lands Inventory work.

PWA name changed to PLC, Piscataquog Land Conservancy.

Invoice from ESRI on 4-25-08.

Andrea passed out **copies of the NH NHI report on Town Lands**. Pat, George, each have one now.

At 10:22 pm George made the motion to adjourn. Pat 2nd the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Myers
Secretary, WCC

CC: Town Clerk, BOS, Merry Rice, WCC files